

We claim:

1. A composition prepared by forming a mixture comprising, on the basis of parts by weight per hundred of elastomer or rubber, phr:

(a) 100 phr of:

(i) at least one vulcanizable elastomer; or

(ii) a mixture of said at least one vulcanizable elastomer and at least one thermoplastic polymer or thermoplastic elastomer;

(b) from about 150 phr to about 500 phr of at least one mineral filler;

(c) from about 0.1 phr to about 10 phr of at least one pigment or colorant; and

(d) at least one vulcanizing agent in sufficient quantity to substantially fully vulcanize said at least one vulcanizable elastomer.

2. The composition of claim 1 wherein said vulcanizable elastomer or rubber is selected from the group consisting of natural rubber and synthetic rubber.

3. The composition of claim 2 wherein said synthetic rubber is selected from the group consisting of butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymers, styrene-butadiene copolymers, ethylene-propylene copolymers and terpolymers, hydrogenated styrene-containing block copolymers, polybutadiene, polyisoprene and butyl rubber.

4. The composition of claim 3 wherein said synthetic rubber comprises a mixture of butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer blended with polyvinyl chloride and styrene-butadiene copolymer.

5. The composition of claim 4 wherein the mixture of butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer and polyvinyl chloride

comprises from about 50 wt.% to about 20 wt.% polyvinyl chloride.

6. The composition of claim 5 wherein the ratio of butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer to styrene-butadiene copolymer is from about 40:60 to about 60:40.

7. The composition of claim 6 further comprising a thermosetting resin.

8. The composition of claim 7 wherein said thermosetting resin is a coumarone-indene resin.

9. The composition of claim 1 further comprising from about 0.01 to about 10 phr of at least one odor masking agent.

10. The composition of claim 9 wherein said at least one odor masking agent is selected from the group consisting of natural and artificial scents.

11. The composition of claim 10 wherein said at least one odor masking agent is an extract of vanilla.

12. The composition of claim 1 wherein said at least one mineral filler is selected from the group consisting of whiting, hard clay, soft clay, kaolin, hydrated aluminum silicate, and silica sand.

13. The composition of claim 1 having the look and feel of natural clay.

14. A molded object prepared by:

(1) forming a mixture of a molding composition comprising, on the basis of parts by weight per hundred of elastomer or rubber, phr:

(a) 100 phr of:

(i) at least one vulcanizable elastomer; or

(ii) a mixture of said at least one vulcanizable elastomer and at least one thermoplastic polymer or thermoplastic elastomer;

(b) from about 150 phr to about 500 phr of at least one mineral filler;

(c) from about 0.1 phr to about 10 phr of at least one pigment or colorant; and

(d) at least one vulcanizing agent in sufficient quantity to substantially fully vulcanize said at least one vulcanizable elastomer;

(2) molding the resultant mixture to a desired shape; and

(3) curing or vulcanizing said shaped mixture.

15. The molded object of claim 14 wherein said vulcanizable elastomer comprises a mixture of butadiene-acrylonitrile copolymer blended with polyvinyl chloride and styrene-butadiene copolymer.

16. The molded object of claim 15 further comprising from about 0.01 to about 10 phr of at least one odor masking agent.

17. The molded object of claim 16 wherein said at least one mineral filler is a mixture comprising whiting and hard clay.

18. The molded object of claim 14 wherein said object is a replacement or substitute for objects molded using natural terra cotta or clay.

19. The molded object of claim 14 wherein said object is a container structure selected from the group consisting of horticultural containers and saucers and beverage bottle coolers.

20. The molded object of claim 19 wherein said container structure is a horticultural container or a wine bottle cooler.

21. The molded object of claim 14 having the look and feel of natural clay.

22. The molded object of claim 21 having improved low temperature and mechanical stability properties.

23. The molded object of claim 14 wherein said at least one vulcanizing agent is of capable of inhibiting plant root growth and is present in an amount greater than that required to substantially fully vulcanize said at least one vulcanizable elastomer and said object is a horticultural container.

24. The molded object of claim 23 wherein said at least one vulcanizing agent includes 2-mercaptobenzothiazole and/or zinc dimethyldithiocarbamate.